

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-16 (Cancelled).

Claim 17 (New): A multiphase method performed by at least a first node of a plurality of nodes in a communication network to determine a central coordinator node for the communication network from among the plurality of nodes, comprising the steps of:

- conducting a listening phase wherein the first node listens for an indication that a central coordinator node has already been elected;

- conducting a discovery phase after the listening phase wherein the first node transmits its node identity and receives from other nodes node identities of other nodes that have transmitted their node identities;

- conducting an election phase after the discovery phase wherein the first node transmits a list of discovered node identities received by the first node from other nodes during the discovery phase, receives from other nodes lists of discovered node identities received by other nodes during the discovery phase and generates topological data based at least in part on information in the transmitted and received lists; and

- conducting a confirm phase after the election phase wherein the first node selectively transmits an indication that the first node is the central coordinator node based at least in part on analysis of the topological data.

Claim 18 (New): The method of claim 17, wherein in the confirm phase the first node transmits an indication that the first node is the central coordinator node, further comprising the step of conducting an operate phase after the confirm phase wherein the first node schedules access on the communication network by other nodes.

Claim 19 (New): The method of claim 17, wherein in the confirm phase the first node does not transmit an indication that the first node is the central coordinator node, further comprising the step of conducting an operate phase after the confirm phase wherein the first node accesses the communication network on a schedule determined by another node that has been elected the central coordinator node.

Claim 20 (New): The method of claim 17, wherein the first node transitions between the listening, discovery, election and confirm phases in response to expiration of timers operative on the first node.

Claim 21 (New): The method of claim 17, wherein the transmitted list includes a node classification of the first node and the received lists include node classifications of other nodes.

Claim 22 (New): The method of claim 17, wherein the topological data comprises a table having entries for other nodes from which the first node has received lists of discovered node identities, and wherein each entry includes a node identity of another node from which the first node received the list and discovered node identities from the list.

Claim 23 (New): The method of claim 22, wherein each entry further includes a node classification of another node from which the first node received the list.

Claim 24 (New): The method of claim 17, wherein the analysis of the topological data comprises a comparison of discovered node identities.

Claim 25 (New): The method of claim 17, wherein in the analysis of the topological data comprises a comparison of node classifications.

Claim 26 (New): The method of claim 17, wherein in the confirm phase the first node selectively receives an indication that another node is the central coordinator node.

Claim 27 (New): A multiphase method performed by at least a first node of a plurality of nodes in a communication network to determine a central coordinator node for the communication network from among the plurality of nodes, comprising the steps of:

- conducting a listening phase wherein the first node listens for an indication that a central coordinator node has already been elected;

- conducting a discovery phase after the listening phase wherein the first node transmits a discover type message including its node identity;

- conducting an election phase after the discovery phase wherein the first node receives from other nodes elect type messages including lists of discovered node identities received by other nodes during the discovery phase and generates topological data based at least in part on information in the received lists; and

- conducting a confirm phase after the election phase wherein the first node selectively transmits a confirm type message indicating that the first node is the central coordinator node based at least in part on analysis of the topological data.

Claim 28 (New): The method of claim 27, wherein in the confirm phase the first node transmits an indication that the first node is the central coordinator node, further comprising the step of conducting an operate phase after the confirm phase wherein the first node schedules access on the communication network by other nodes.

Claim 29 (New): The method of claim 27, wherein in the confirm phase the first node does not transmit an indication that the first node is the central coordinator node, further comprising the step of conducting an operate phase after the confirm

phase wherein the first node accesses the communication network on a schedule determined by another node that has been elected the central coordinator node.

Claim 30 (New): The method of claim 27, wherein the first node transitions between the listening, discovery, election and confirm phases in response to expiration of timers operative on the first node.

Claim 31 (New): The method of claim 27, wherein the received lists include node classifications of other nodes.

Claim 32 (New): A multiphase method performed by at least a first node of a plurality of nodes in a communication network to determine a central coordinator node for the communication network from among the plurality of nodes, comprising the steps of:

- starting a listening phase wherein the first node sets a listening phase timer and listens for an indication that a central coordinator node has already been elected;

- starting a discovery phase when the listening phase timer expires wherein the first node sets a discovery phase timer and transmits its node identity;

- starting an election phase when the discovery phase timer expires wherein the first node sets an election phase timer, receives from other nodes lists of discovered node identities received by other nodes during the discovery phase and generates topological data based at least in part on information in the lists; and

- starting a confirm phase when the election phase timer expires wherein the first node selectively transmits an indication that the first node is the central coordinator node based at least in part on analysis of the topological data.

Claim 33 (New): The method of claim 32, wherein in the confirm phase the first node transmits an indication that the first node is the central coordinator node, further

comprising the step of conducting an operate phase after the confirm phase wherein the first node schedules access on the communication network by other nodes.

Claim 34 (New): The method of claim 32, wherein in the confirm phase the first node does not transmit an indication that the first node is the central coordinator node, further comprising the step of conducting an operate phase after the confirm phase wherein the first node accesses the communication network on a schedule determined by another node that has been elected the central coordinator node.

Claim 35 (New): The method of claim 32, wherein the received lists include node classifications of other nodes.